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Mining, time and protest: Dealing with waiting in German coal mine planning

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ABSTRACT

Three villages in East Germany have been in a stage of waiting for the Jänschwalde-Nord coal mine since 2007. Through opening the mine planning procedure, the mining company implied a nexus of coal-time, which local residents tried to disturb, but did not question as such. These politics of time generated several stages of waiting, which could only be dealt with more efficiently through de-synchronising the struggle and mine planning. The coal-time nexus was exchanged for a narrative of time relating to Energiewende and climate change, allowing for waiting to be anticipated as an act of endurance and perseverance. Attending and realigning mining temporalities allowed mine opponents to live through the stage of waiting.

1. Introduction

Mining has a long history in Germany, which reaches back to the Middle Ages. But it was particularly coal mining from the end of the 19th century onwards that enabled Germany's industrial development and its rise to become an economic world power. As in other parts of the world, the fossil fuel led to entanglements of resources, labour movements, and democracy (Mitchell, 2013), within which Germany exemplifies a comparatively early case of the development of carbon-related economy, traditions and identities (Tenfelde et al., 2012). Coal continues to play an essential role for German energy production and the economy at large, even though hard coal is today almost exclusively imported from other countries. As for lignite, Germany is the largest producer worldwide, with four mining areas in the Lausitz, the Rheinland, near Helmstedt and near Leipzig. While the workforce has been shrinking since the first decades of the 20th century in both hard coal and lignite mining, lignite mining areas continue to be economically, culturally, and visually characterised or influenced by opencast mining (see IInstitut für Europäische Ethnologie der Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin und Sorbisches Institut Bautzen, 1997).

This past entanglement of German lignite mining becomes at present more and more contested. The national context of the Energiewende is scrutinising fossil-fuel energy production. Implemented in 2011, the Energiewende sets an important framework for contemporary coal mining through drafting a scenario and passing regulatory directives for an exit from nuclear and fossil dependency and towards a country running on renewables (Renn, Marshall 2016; Schafhausen, 2013), albeit within an imprecise and ever-changing timeframe. Even though a phase-out or at least a significant reduction of coal burning is demanded to meet the emission reduction goals set by the national government, energy companies and unions have successfully managed to delay important steps to reach these goals. It is such non-synchronisms of mining in both larger and more localised contexts that this article addresses. It focuses on temporalities implemented in mine planning and uses the Jänschwalde-Nord mining field in the Lausitz mining area as a case study to demonstrate how politics of time are played out. Following the various stages of mine planning and the protests against it in a chronological pattern allows for an understanding of how people deal with time and change its conceptualisation. It becomes apparent that conflicting conceptions of time do not need to be stable throughout the (in this case ten-year-long) mine planning process. On the contrary, anticipations of defining time and installing a hierarchical waiting situation saw various strategies of acceptance as well as opposition. Timescales were questioned and adapted, eventually leading to putting the plans for the mine back on the shelf.

By drawing attention to time and particularly exploring the notions of waiting employed in mine planning, the article directly relates to the 2018 special issue of this journal where D'Angelo and Pijpers discussed mining temporalities. As the authors showed, anthropological work has been and continues to be instrumental for understanding how "different social actors try to know, tame or manipulate [a complex mesh of multiple temporalities] by (de)synchronising them in line with contingent and often conflicting strategic interests" (D'Angelo and Pijpers, 2018: 215). Fieldwork is thereby the basis of arguments about how people appropriate the past, present and future in relation to planned, ongoing or finished mining, be it envisioning a bright future and development through mining (Wiegink, 2018) or heritagising former mining sites (Oakley, 2018). Turning our attention to mining temporalities helps to distinguish time-related company or government strategies for mining (Kesselring, 2018; Brichet, 2018), which are often in

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stark contrast to how time - especially the past, present and future - is anticipated by local communities (Askland, 2018; Wiegink, 2018). This article adds a decidedly present-focused analysis to mining temporalities, by examining how a mining company seizes defining power over velocity and time markers. As Wiegink (2018) describes, mine planning creates a horizon of expectation, yet in this case it is quite a negative one associated with the notion of displacement. However, as opposed to the inhabitants of Wollar, Australia, who long for a past and thus feel displaced on a temporal scale (Askland, 2018), it is the anticipated future of spatially defined displacement that swings like a sword of Damocles above villagers' heads in the Lausitz mining area. The question is whether the temporality of mining, as anticipated by the mining company, can prevail. Once it's started, the mining process is depicted as unavoidable. It defines time perception through installing a regime of waiting.

It is this waiting as a form of regulating both time and the agency of others that this article is foremost concerned with. It turns to the politics of time as an instrument of creating inequality. Making someone wait is a form of executing power, of restricting someone in their self-determination and ability to plan and proceed with their lives. In waiting, time and its perception surface most clearly as instruments of control (D'Angelo and Pijpers, 2018; Jordheim, 2014). What has garnered less attention so far is the way mine planning relates to waiting during periods of energy transformation. This is important, because during economically and ecologically wide-ranging moments of energy transitions it is not only of interest how long the energy transition might take (Sovacool, 2016), but also how people engage with scenarios of energy transition. How do people come to terms with the Energiewende while at the same time waiting for coal mine planning to proceed? As this article will show, they can do so precisely through applying and redefining mining temporalities.

I will demonstrate in the following how corporate and state politics try to define perceptions of time in an area designated for mining, and how local people deal with the temporal settings aligned to this planning. 'Coal time' is characterised by waiting, but also by a time-consuming and highly regulated mine planning procedure. This allows opponents to intervene and helps to combine coal mining plans with hopeful narratives of opposition and a timely exit from fossil-fuel energy. Local communities in the case of the Jänschwalde-Nord mine extension reworked their perceptions of coal time. Waiting remained the overarching time-reference for most opponents (as well as proponents of the mine[1]), but the use and conceptualisation of the 'remaining time' were re-contextualised, marking a shift from synchronous time narratives between the village and mining companies to ones that are geared to national environmental politics and global climate debates.

The paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork in the area of the Lausitz in East Germany between July 2014 and May 2017.[2] Ethnographic and journalistic research was conducted by Tom Morton and the author in form of participant observation mostly during, before and after protest events, with stays lasting between a day and two weeks - totalling about four months of participant observation. We recorded[3] more than 30 semi-structured interviews, and conducted countless informal conversations, both with opponents and proponents of the mine. This research was complemented by tours through the operating Jänschwalde mine and recultivated mining fields in the Lausitz, as well as a close monitoring of media reports and press releases between November 2014 and March 2017.

After conveying a sense of the village and the threat of the Jänschwalde-Nord mine extension, I will introduce the planning procedure. It provides the original timeframe, which pushed people threatened with eviction into a stage of uncertainty and putative powerlessness. The article continues chronologically by depicting how, after the initial shock, local opposition to the mine quickly formed, challenging dichotomous power relations embedded in waiting. When this project failed to succeed, the villagers affected by the mine planning retreated to low scale, repetitive protest and the narrative of energy transformation. The years of 2010 to 2017 saw this narrative with its corresponding timeframe grow bigger, as new alliances continuously supported local protest groups. It also strengthened the inclusion of the global trope of climate change, within which people demanded urgent action on the slow-moving threat. I analyse the inclusion of climate change also as a temporal reframing that enabled local protesters to go through a transformation of waiting - from actively resisting to bravely enduring. Embedding local action in larger dimensions helped alleviate some of the painstaking aspects of the struggle. The article will conclude with the end of the wait in 2017, when the mining company announced that it was withdrawing its mining plans for Jänschwalde-Nord. I will show that what was declared an economic decision can also be read as a success of local protest.

2. A point in time

It is a chilly Saturday afternoon when I meet Roswitha for an interview. Last night brought a bit of snow again and bushes and plants in the front garden of Roswitha's family house are covered with a thin white layer. The snow on the sidewalk has been shovelled, although the occasional cars on Kerkwitz's main road still have a dusting. There are very few cars anyway, as the village with its 500 inhabitants and its small main road sees hardly any through traffic. The air is filled with the sound of hens, an occasional dog bark, and a few birdcalls. Roswitha leads me from the yard into the house and up the stairs to the living room, where she serves coffee for the two of us. She pours the coffee from the thermos flask into the nicely ornamented cups and we have a sip before we start our conversation on her and the village's struggle against the Jänschwalde-Nord mine extension, one we will later continue when she shows me around the small village church.

Roswitha, an agile woman in her sixties, who is retired, lives with her husband on the same land that her family owned for generations, at least since the 1600s; her daughter with her husband and children are on the same plot next door. She and her husband have been active opponents against Jänschwalde-Nord ever since the planning procedure was announced, attending and organising protest marches and demonstrations and participating in local citizens' initiatives. People are used to their attendance, so much so that they are perturbed whenever they occasionally don't make it to one here in Kerkwitz, the neighbouring village of Atterwasch, or the ones in Proschim and Schleife, villages a little further south that are also threatened with eviction by (different) mine extensions.

When we talk about Kerkwitz, Roswitha dwells on the 550-year history of the village, the pre-industrial adobe and later brick production, and the influx of resettlers after the Second World War. The village grew again after 1990, she says, when people were able to erase the pre-emption rights for mining industries from their lands, and building materials were easier to acquire. 1990 is also marked the year when politicians declared that the village of Horno, situated about twelve kilometres southwest of Kerkwitz, would be the last village in the Lausitz to make room for coal mining. 2007 was for Roswitha and the other

[1] This article excludes for the most part the opinions of mine proponents, who exist both in the affected villages of Atterwasch, Kerkwitz and Grabko and in other villages and cities. This is due to the dissimilar basis of data we gathered (focusing on protest against the mine) and the emphasis of this paper on the opponents' waiting situation. For voices from mine workers or mine proponents see Morton and Müller, 2016.

[2] The ethnographic research is part of the project 'The Coal Rush and Beyond', based at the University of Technology Sydney. This larger project looks at coal mining in Australia, India and Germany (see www.coalrush.net), and was supported by the Australian Research Council.

[3] Methodologically, audio-recording was to be part of the research. Radio features were scheduled outputs (see http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/scienceshow/beyond-the-coal-rush-part-1:-the-march-of-coal/7782022).

inhabitants of Kerkwitz, as well as the neighbouring villages of Atterwasch and Grabko, the next important time mark. May 2007 brought the publishing of the Clausthal study, saying that despite promises another 33 villages in the Lausitz could be torn down for mining. But no one seriously believed that Kerkwitz would be one of them.

Well, they published the study and we said that this is to be seen. That was May 2007. And on September 18th we flew off on holidays. My husband got up in the morning, around six. I was still lying in bed, the radio was on, and they said on the radio – we were informed through radio – that Kerkwitz should make way for the new mine Jänschwalde-Nord. Through radio! We went on vacation that day, and on the way, they only talked about Kerkwitz. Only in the afternoon they said Grabko and Atterwasch, too. The same day. And in the afternoon – well, we went to Mallorca – in the afternoon all residents here in Kerkwitz had a notice in their mailbox that there was to be a residents' meeting. And that is how it got published, but first through the press. And this vacation in Mallorca – you can't imagine – it was simply terrible. I hardly slept. Because you always think, something – to me it felt like I was standing on a peaky mountain, always afraid to fall down. That was really an awful time. I sometimes still wake up at night or dream that I am packing things, wondering what to take and what to leave, dream that I have to go somewhere when I don't want to go anywhere. (Interview December 2014)

Like Roswitha, many people in the three villages of Kerkwitz, Atterwasch and Grabko clearly remember the day they got the notification that they were scheduled for relocation and their village for demolition. September 2007 was and continues to be narrated as the time mark for the start of their struggle against coal mining, which in the following years structured how time seemed to proceed.

The existing Jänschwalde mine covers an area of sixty km² and provides an average of thirteen million tons of raw brown coal per year, which is burned in the adjacent Jänschwalde power plant. The Jänschwalde mine, situated in the Lausitz north of the regional capital Cottbus, has been operational since 1971 and will be empty by the 2020s. The mine extension of Jänschwalde-Nord is hence needed in order to continuously generate electricity and heat in the power plant.[4] According to the mine plan, the extension would require the relocation and destruction of the Kerkwitz, Atterwasch and Grabko villages, which have a total of 900 inhabitants.

For these villagers, the 2007 announcement marks the official start of the mine planning process, which also fractured how *their* time proceeded. From then on, the mine planning set dates according to which people had to react. The mine planning's proceedings determined how the villagers perceived time - with their relocation as an endpoint. The speed of the mine planning framed life in the villages from then on.

The official framework for mining in Germany is provided by the government in the form of the mining law and associated administrative regulations. One of the most time-consuming aspects of mining is actually mine planning, an administrative process a company – in this case the Swedish state-owned company Vattenfall Europe – has to traverse before being granted a license to mine. While licenses to mine coal deposits are usually granted for a period of up to 50 years and not disbarred, the mine planning procedure provides involved actors the opportunity for interventions, objections and demand for alternations. In general, it is said that mine planning procedures in Germany take about six to ten years.

Lignite mine planning in Germany (see Berkner et al., 2000; Krappweis et al., 2018) works on two levels, the federal and the state level. Firstly, on the state level the so-called Braunkohleplan (lignite plan) has to be drafted and approved. The lignite plan is a land use regulatory approval procedure and part of the regional planning program. It is drafted based on the interests of the mining company and the state. It requires the preclusion of more suitable energy alternatives and location alternatives, which is followed by a scoping process. Vattenfall submitted the first documents for the Jänschwalde-Nord lignite plan in late 2008, thus officially opening the planning procedure.

3. Getting protest started

The residents of Atterwasch, Kerkwitz and Grabko did not want to wait for this official opening. The notification and the joint press conference that Vattenfall and the state government of Brandenburg held in 2007 was the signal for protest to form. After an initial moment of shock, local people in opposition to the mine started to react to the announcement and organised action around and against it. Several alliances and public committees were formed or refocused their agenda on coal mining, among them the 'Agenda 21 der Gemeinde Schenkendöbern', 'Gegen neue Braunkohletagebaue - Pro Heimat e.V.' and later also the 'Bündnis Heimat und Zukunft'. These citizen initiatives were designed to monitor developments, generate strategies of resistance, and publicly promote protest against Jänschwalde-Nord. In that period – that is, at the very beginning of the mine planning process – the affected villagers were not passively enduring, but being proactive, in accordance to the set mining planning timeframe.

While most active villagers worked in different working groups towards preventing relocation, one committee actually approached Vattenfall with ideas, thoughts and expectations about relocation. This led to massive controversy and ill-feeling in the local community, because the majority objected to relocation.[5] Most residents of Atterwasch, Kerkwitz and Grabko (AKG) had an anti-mining stance or took at least a pro-'Heimat' stance of strong emotional attachment to the place they call home. As often in the case of relocation, it is not necessarily or not only the prospect of uncertainty or worsening economic and social conditions that leads people to object to relocation.[6] It is also the fact that places are associated with memories and experiences which are embodied in relation to landscape (Hirsch and O'Hanlon, 2003; Bender, 2002). A village can be spatially perceived as a place of identification, meaning people refuse to leave, especially not by force (Morton, Müller 2016; Türcke, 2006; Applegate, 1990). Consequently, when AKG residents were threatened with the loss of Heimat through relocation, they organised their first protest march as early as January 2008. The so-called Sternmarsch saw residents and their supporters march from the three villages, equipped with banners and signboards, to meet in a central open field between AKG, where statements and speeches would make their position against the mine extension explicit.

A comparatively much larger effort, which required personal as well as financial resources, was the initiation of several forms of direct democracy. Agenda 21, along with other local protest groups, organised a collection of signatures in order to enforce public decision making on the mine extension. In 2007 they collected more than 20,000 signatures required for a popular petition (Volksinitiative). As a consequence of this successful attempt to raise support and voice their refusal to be relocated for coal mining, the state parliament of Brandenburg had to make the mine extension a topic in parliament. However, this political debate brought no tangible results. The villagers consequently tried to go a step further, and in 2008 started collecting signatures for a so-called Volksbegehren. This instrument of direct democracy initiates a referendum on an issue when people manage to collect 80,000 supportive signatures.

[4] Other proposed new mines or mine extensions in the Lausitz are/were Spremberg-Ost, Bagenz-Ost, Nochten II and Welzow-Süd II (see Grüne Liga, 2015).

[5] It was the only time that neighbours didn't greet each other when meeting in the street–a severe social punishment in German rural societies (see Henkel, 2014).

[6] For a comprehensive review of literature on mining and resistance to mining see Ballard, Banks 2003 and Rogers, 2015.

In summary, the announcement of mine planning in September 2007 initially led to shock and emotional distress. But the residents of AKG channelled this distress into agitation and activity. They saw 2007 as a blow, but not one that would lead them to letting the state and the company dictate their future. Similar to what Felix Ringel describes regarding structural change in Hoyerswerda, people tried to make the future subject to their agency, too. It is what Ringel calls a form of 'tricking time', of trying to manage the future despite the fact that supposedly more powerful mechanisms are working against you (Ringel, 2016). The residents opposed Vattenfall and the state of Brandenburg by forming citizen initiatives, organising protest marches, and starting referenda, as soon as the initial shock subsided.

'Tricking time' went beyond 'doing work on the future' (Ringel, 2016). It also related to the present, as local villagers did not want to subordinate themselves to the state and a company's anticipation of mine planning as setting the end point for their villages in an estimated six to ten years from 2007. Villagers were not yet willing to settle for passive waiting. They went with the timeframe as set by the mine planners, yet tried to unsettle it whenever possible.

4. Getting stuck

The local working groups with their networks of predominantly regional supporters eventually failed to collect the 80,000 signatures necessary for the referendum. For the local residents it felt like a defeat after taking on a mammoth task, considering that AKG has a population of 900 in total. The failure of this initial attempt to make use of available political and legal means was a setback and the mine planning could continue.

In May 2011, the first scoping took place. It was an environmental impact assessment, which according to law needed to be made public at predetermined times, allowing individuals and communities to intervene within a prescribed timespan. The Grüne Liga Cottbus, an environmental NGO, was one of the strongest intervening forces in this regard. Despite the multiple inputs, which were also made in accord with the citizens' initiatives, a positive decision on the environment assessment followed in April 2012.

The public was furthermore involved in the mine planning processes through the Braunkohlenausschuss, an assembly of delegates from the city councils involved and from civil society (environmental NGOs, the church, the agrarian association, the union, trade and business associations, and a representative of the Sorb minority). The assembly met regularly during the Jänschwalde-Nord planning process, as it is officially part of regional decision-making, having an advisory function. It provides reports and statements that can influence decisions which essentially lie with the state government. The assembly discussing the Jänschwalde-Nord mine was always made up of both proponents and opponents of the mine. Working through the Braunkohlenaussschuss is thus not straightforward, but requires constant negotiations and discussions.

After the 2008 attempt at a referendum, the opposition side of the struggle for Jänschwalde-Nord became about persevering. Protest was publicly staged as a response to politicians' decisions or as a repetitive action. The local working groups staged a protest at several public (political party) meetings, or performed invented protest forms every year. The Sternmarsch eventually became a ritual taking place every first Sunday in January. The Dorffest, the village fête in Atterwasch, enhanced the Sternmarsch as a repetitive form of protest. It has taken place on the last day of every October since 2012. Opponents hereby repeat similar actions of marching and publicly speaking. The realisation of both events, as well as of other responsive protest forms certainly requires agency and effort. They also function as important acts of reassurance and cohesion. However, they could not live up to the initial agitations and protests, and passed without distinct results. Their repetitiveness and responsive character were a sign of changes in the villagers' perception of time, which was starting to synchronise with the mine planners' schedule; a sign of a feeling of 'stuckedness' taking over.

The waiting in AKG was very similar to what is described as a cultural practice of experiencing and dealing with time that stretches. Time during waiting seems endless and wasted. It is in Western contexts most often thought of as a negative experience that includes annoyance, boredom and wearisomeness. Waiting – ethnographically described and analysed in everyday waiting situations by Löfgren et al. (2010) – is a personal and cultural creation charged with different, but mostly negative, emotions, where the attention of the one waiting is drawn to time. Stages of waiting are often dreaded, as they are stages of passivity. Likewise, the villagers of AKG did not voluntarily resign themselves to waiting, but retreated to this state as initial active opposition bore no fruits.

Waiting is thereby a form of temporality where its entwinement with dependency and power plays out prominently. It is a distinct timely expression of hierarchical relationships between actors. While waiting instead of taking action, one reveals that someone else is in charge of acting and decision making. In the case of Jänschwalde-Nord, the mining company and the state took the lead as decision makers and administrators. The dictated the length of waiting and structured the time of the waiting residents according to the company's and the state's needs and requirements. They thereby valued time for mining and mine planning higher than the time of the villagers, who complied. Often things are beyond the control of the one waiting, out of his or her hands (Hage, 2009a). Time is structured by the person or agency whose services or action someone waiting longs for. It is a form of exercising power, as '[w]aiting is patterned by the distribution of power in a social system' (Schwartz, 1974: 843). Embedded in a social context, the one who makes someone wait is the one who is able to do so without fearing severe consequences.

In situations thus characterised, people develop various ways of dealing with waiting. Camouflaging the stage of waiting or channelling patience or impatience in different directions are two ways of doing so. Ending the wait or deliberately acting against it are two other means. All of these forms - reading a newspaper, eating snacks, looking at the phone while waiting in a doctor's office, leaving the bus stop and taking a taxi instead or demanding another counter be opened - relate back to the nexus of waiting as wasting time and being mobile rather than immobile. To various degrees, they are all forms of opposing waiting by acting despite being obliged to wait.

However, in the case of the Jänschwalde-Nord mine planning - where waiting stretched over years - these practices were not applicable. Neither is avoiding the situation an issue, as the coal deposits are situated underneath the villages and plans to mine these are drafted. When means of opposition are exhausted, waiting can enhance to a feeling of 'stuckedness'. Local residents of AKG could not make immediate progress through their attempts to influence the future by 'tricking time'. Changing how the present is structured seemed to be in vain, and a feeling of 'stuckedness' advanced. Stuckedness 'is by definition a situation where a person suffers from both the absence of choices or alternatives to the situation they are in and an inability to grab such alternatives even if they present themselves.' (Hage, 2009b: 100). It leads to the development of the idea that one cannot do anything but repeat routines, and wait for others to decide how and when to proceed.

This is not to say that the protests against the mine in AKG stopped or that locals retreated to complete lethargy and depression. Local people did observe signs of demotivation, most visible in the absence of festive lightning in the villages during winter time, expressing a decrease in conviviality. Waiting is psychologically challenging - it mellows resistance, it is tiresome. Some perceived it as the worst part of the continuing struggle. Helga, for example, is a retired woman in her seventies, who does not take a strong stance against mining, but frowns upon the idea of having to move at her age. She would rather remain in her house in Atterwasch, where she lived for the last forty years, despite the fact that her husband passed away a few years ago and she now

looks after an old building and the adjacent garden, with chickens and rabbits, by herself. She says,

We had in 2007, in September, I will not forget that, on September 17th, 2007, we had a notice in the mail box, the information that brown coal is coming, and Vattenfall. That was officially the first notice. And then, in the course of time, one reads in the newspaper from time to time [different ideas of resettlement]. But we are not for a long time there yet, that's the situation from 2007 until today [in 2015]. Nothing changed. And there is always talk: yes and no. But the worst thing is the uncertainty. That is the worst. If you knew, knew exactly that coal is coming, you would – at least me in my age, I would start looking around a bit, if I could get something different, something smaller, not necessarily so many buildings as I have now, but… (Interview April 2015)

This statement, which represents the attitude of many villagers, shows the hardships waiting can entail, particularly in psychological terms. One can try to keep your hopes up, but when procedures start to stretch, feelings of uncertainty and powerlessness can creep in. For Jänschwalde-Nord results - for better or worse - came about neither immediately nor in the medium term. Vattenfall announced its plans to mine in 2007 and the decision about scoping of environmental impact assessment, only a pre-stage of the actual assessment, was made only four and a half years later.

Political decisions were not very helpful in resolving the issue and bringing about a definite decision, either. The left party for example, took a stand against new mines before the state elections in 2009, only to completely reverse this course after being in power. On national level, the minister of economic affairs wanted to push forward with an exit from coal mining by presenting plans for a climate contribution. The climate contribution, announced in 2014, would have had industries pay for emissions, which implied a price decline and potential inefficiency of brown coal mining. Yet, in 2015, the ministry instead introduced the capacity reserve, a compensation plan that paid coal-fired power plants to keep some of their blocks on hold, thus gold-plating coal-based emissions (Gawel et al., 2015). The change of plan was not least a result of the miners' union's and the mining companies' protests, demonstrating once more their power to influence political decision making. International politics and the climate summits had similarly little impact on the mine plans. The 2015 Paris Agreement made climate protection and CO_2-emission-reduction a central topic. It raised hopes for implementing climate protection goals in banning new coal mines. But the subsequent German Climate Protection Plan 2050, published in 2016, initially formulated and then quickly erased paragraphs against new mines and mine extensions (Bundesministerium för Umwelt et al., 2016; Pötter, 2016).

5. Waiting it out

Stages of waiting are not perceived as equally stressful nor necessarily dealt with homogeneously over the course of years. While it is true that many people in AKG describe the wait and the uncertainty as one of the most painful aspects of the struggle, there were at times more optimistic voices and acceptance of the wait. Roland, the head of Kerkwitz for more than a decade and active in opposing the mine since 2007, explains how he saw the struggle after several years of ups and downs, positive and negative signs, promises and disappointment.

Well, the chances, they don't look that bad at all. That is simply as it is. Because the renewables will develop further, even if someone tries to thwart it a bit some way or the other. But in the end you won't stop it. And somehow the time, well, the time is simply on our side in this regard. Yes, and giving up hope is not an issue at all. (Interview December 2014)

Roland displays here the pragmatic stance that mine opponents in AKG developed – consciously or unconsciously – over the years: Giving up hope is not an option. But equally important is that it illustrates that there are alternative timeframes one can relate to in the struggle against the mine. Roland's statement is part of a narrative that utilises the national agenda as a time-related reference point. He argues that they have to wait for technological developments and national politics. Focusing on the Energiewende and the rise of renewable energies allows him to perceive these as the future of energy production. Making a connection to this a relevant temporality allows waiting to appear slightly less daunting. In this timeframe, coal mining in the Lausitz is a relic of the past. It is a historic and outdated technique.

Christian, who lives in Atterwasch and is also an active member of a local working group opposing Jänschwalde-Nord, follows this line of argument when he states 'we can't, we don't seriously want to cling on to a technology that actually belongs to the nineteenth century! This is where [coal mining technology] dates back to!' (Interview December 2014). He links the opposition to changing from coal to renewables to the weavers' revolt when electric looms were introduced, pointing out that developments and changes are at times unavoidable and necessary, even if they come with resistance. This historical anchorage has two advantages. On the one hand it translates the mine opponents' position from one of opposing advancement into one of supporting progress. Opposing the mine is supporting the Energiewende as a much-needed technological change in energy production. On the other hand, this narrative sees waiting in a more positive light as it centres one's own time perception on different developments. The Jänschwalde-Nord mine planning is attributed a minor role in this context. The relevance of the Energiewende as a national transformation with its supposedly longer timeframe makes a break with the mine planning. Connecting waiting to renewable energy policies and technology instead of mine planning and the destruction of the villages gives endurance a positive twist. With the coal industry in Germany up for debate, enduring and perseverance acquire a more affirmative connotation.

This narrative of time was enhanced by global discourses of climate change and global warming. The input of the Lausitzer Klima- und Energiecamp (short: Lausitzcamp) was also crucial, which entered the local protest in 2011 and introduced or strengthened the focus on the global environmental consequences of the local coal mining industry. Initiated by environmental activists mostly based in the cities of Berlin, Cottbus or Leipzig, the Lausitzcamp established itself as a regular summer protest in the area, lasting about a week each year. It comprised public discussions, workshops on the effects of mining, sustainable living and climate change, protest marches, and larger actions designed to draw media attention, such as banner dropping, human chains, and protests in front of power plants or the offices of policy makers.

The Lausitzcamp had two major effects on the local protests against Jänschwalde-Nord. Firstly, it supported the local struggle on a continuous basis, bringing resources and media attention. It helped reaffirm that protest was not in vain, and brought new alliances and networks for the local protesters. This new form of protest – which sometimes pushed the limits of local acceptance – reinforced the active side of waiting and resistance to some extent. It combined this new take on opposition with a continuity and repetitiveness. Secondly, the Lausitzcamp spread knowledge about global entanglements of coal mining, and placed a focus on climate change and energy production. It provided arguments for relating the locally-felt effects of coal mining and combustion to its global environmental consequences, links that became important for local protesters in their ability to argue and endure. It provided another timeframe for the local struggle, one that was longer but at the same time more urgent. Climate change requires immediate action to keep the levels of global warming below 2.0°. Action need to be taken globally, nationally and locally, which in consequence would mean an increase of pressure on national governments and in particular on Germany regarding the speed of implementing the Energiewende. This would, in turn, ultimately collide with the mine planning timeframe.

The longevity of mine planning previously - perceived as a challenge or even a threat, especially psychologically - could now be accepted as an opportunity. If waiting and endurance is kept up long

enough for those other developments to proceed and take over, Jänschwalde-Nord would not stand a chance of coming into being. Embedding the local situation in medium-term contexts of energy production development and the long-term contexts of global warming, provided AKG protesters with the possibility of transforming their feelings of stuckedness into endurance and patience, including the prospect of stopping Jänschwalde-Nord. The crisis of possible relocation could be confronted by a celebration of one's capacity to stick it out rather than calling for activism.

It is in this context that local mine opponents like Roland, quoted earlier, could interpret waiting differently. The passivity of waiting can be ambivalent - either threatening and tiresome or regarded as an almost brave act of endurance. Roland and some of his fellow protesters could adhere to waiting less with its paralysing aspects, but allude to a 'certain nobility of spirit' and 'one's freedom as a human' (Hage, 2009b: 101f.). This is not to say that this was a decidedly conscious decision or one that all mine critics took. But almost all the active mine opponents in AKG that I talked to expressed at one point a slightly more optimistic take on the current situation and the future of the area when referring to the support they experienced through outside partners and the mid- or long-term prospects of the Energiewende. Framing their wait this way also blurs dichotomised power relations of time setting. Even if time perception and prospects of the immediate future are determined by the mining company, in the longer run and in the bigger picture time is on the side of the mine opponents, as Roland put it. It seems that if one plays for time regarding the Jänschwalde-Nord mine, one can gain some sovereignty in a situation that was originally characterised as one of imbalanced power relations. The re-conception of the entanglements in time and the focus on medium-term developments embedded in national and global proceedings allowed the villagers to interpret waiting in a more positive way. Psychologically, this also lifted some of the weight of everyday routine actions, such as taking care of the house and fields, renovations, keeping spirits up, and continuing with everyday social life, which had become harder ever since the threat of eviction had transformed into a stage of waiting.

6. Ending the wait - for now

In 2015, the Swedish owner Vattenfall decided to sell the power plants and mines and officially started the selling process, which consequently put the mine planning on hold. In late 2016 Vattenfall completed the sale to the Czech energy company EPH and the Czech investment firm PPF Investments. Until March 2017 there was no complete draft of the lignite plan for the Jänschwalde-Nord mine. The required procedure of participation had not taken place either. The process of this mine's planning was still in a very early stage. For this particular mine, the average estimate of six to ten years for mine approval turned out to be not at all a realistic scenario. Vattenfall's and the state government of Brandenburg's original plan was to approve the lignite plan by 2014. This plan was later delayed to early 2015. After 2015 the planning office had not nominated any dates. There was also no application for the operating plan (Rahmenbetriebsplan), the second stage of the mine planning approval subject to federal law, which would again require approval of environmental and social impact assessments.

In March 2017, the owner EPH finally announced that they would not perpetuate the mine planning for Jänschwalde-Nord. The villages of Atterwasch, Grabko and Kerkwitz would not make room for coal mining. Eviction and resettlement were averted. The mine opponents emerged victorious from their struggle against the mine extension and received the announcement with great joy. A celebration to thank all supporters was held in September 2017. EPH, however, stated that the withdrawal was purely due to economic reasons, thereby claiming unilateral decision-making agency over the mine extension. The price of lignite, however, increased almost constantly between 2000 and 2013, with a slight decline starting in early 2014 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2018). What can be argued as a rational decision of consolidating this mining business, also raises questions of why they bought into it at all when prices are declining. Exiting coal mining or prolonging lignite-based energy production are without doubt procedures combining political decision making with technical questions and economic reasoning. Actors considering exiting coal mining are well advised to consider these aspects, as well as the social and ecological effects of what for the Lausitz would be a structural change (see Oei et al., 2014).

However, addressing only politicians and mining companies as relevant actors to bring about progress in coal mining falls short for two reasons. For one, it ignores the fact that the double stakeholder model of government and companies in mining has long been extended to a triad stakeholder one, recognising local communities as important actors, sometimes including NGOs and consultants as a fourth group. A large number of (not only) anthropological studies have analysed these groups and their entanglements in great detail (see Ballard, Banks 2003). Secondly, neglecting civil society as a potentially influential actor in conceptualising future developments of energy production succumbs to neoliberal narratives or market regulations where pro-business options are politically backed as 'without alternative'. The long-term, low-scale struggle of a handful of villagers, with support from environmental activists, did not lead to a sudden and straightforward exit from coal. Neither is it the ultimate factor deciding the failure or success of the German Energiewende or climate developments on a global level. Yet, local residents understand that they contributed to these aspects. From their point of view, they were successful in their struggle to prevent the mine extension, which is - even if marginally - related to global and national developments. An important aspect in this struggle was the employment of timeframes different to prevalent ones, making the struggle over new coal mines also "a struggle to define, impose and manage a single temporal regime among the many others which are possible" (D'Angelo and Pijpers, 2018: 220). In the Lausitzian villages, involving national and global intertwinements meant expanding the temporal axis. It meant delineating coal-based energy production as a technique dating to the past, which has - in the context of the current developments of Energiewende and climate change - no placein the future.

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